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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000169

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SUBJECT: LES FORCES VIVES FINALIZE TRANSITION PROPOSAL

Classified By: A/DCM SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Les Forces Vives are close to finalizing a concrete election proposal, which they plan to present to the CNDD soon. The latest proposal specifies dates for legislative and presidential elections in 2009, and calls for the immediate establishment of a transitional council (CNT) tasked with constitutional reform. Although likely technically feasible, the proposal may be unrealistic given the political situation. The International Contact Group provided extensive feedback, including several criticisms of Les Forces Vives' lack of assertiveness in dealing with the CNDD. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) At the end of a marathon set of meetings around the International Contact Group (ICG) visit (to be reported septel), Les Forces Vives presented a concrete proposal for Guinea's political transition to local ICG members on March 17, which they ultimately plan to present to the CNDD. Les Forces Vives were represented by their spokesperson, opposition political leader Jean-Marie Dore (UPG). Other representatives included Sidya Toure (UFR), Alpha Conde (RPG), Sekou Konate (PUP), Oury Bah (UFDG), Mamadou Syllah (UPG), union leader Dr. Ibrahima Fofana (USTG), and civil society leader Hadja Saran Daraba (CNOSG). The diplomatic corps included the Ambassadors of France, Spain, Germany, Mali, Nigeria, the US Charge and the Burkinabe Chief of Staff to the Foreign Minister as well as the country representatives for the UN and the EU. Ambassador Edward Aina, the ECOWAS representative in Guinea, co-chaired the meeting with Mamadou Ouattara of the African Union.

THE TRANSITION TIMELINE

¶3. (SBU) Les Forces Vives emphasized the importance of establishing a National Council for Transition (CNT), which would be tasked with reforming the constitution. They proposed the following transition timeline:

- March 2009 - Creation of the CNT
- March/April 2009 - Completion of electoral registration
- May/June 2009 - Verification and publication of electoral list
- July/August 2009 - Distribution of electoral cards
- September 2009 - adoption of the revised constitution via presidential decree
- 11 October 2009 - Legislative elections
- 13 December 2009 - First round for presidential elections
- 27 December 2009 - Second round for presidential elections

¶4. (SBU) Earlier in the ICG meetings, Les Forces Vives had discussed the possibility of demanding that the transitional government conduct a thorough investigation into the human rights abuses allegedly committed by security forces in 2006 and 2007. By the March 17 meeting, they had agreed to postpone this objective, leaving it as a priority for the newly elected government.

ADVICE AND COMMENTS FROM THE DIP CORPS

¶15. (SBU) During the discussion that followed, the Malian Ambassador commented that there seemed to be too many governing organs to effectively manage a transition. "The CNDD's played a historic role by peacefully seizing power...now they should hand the business of transition over to a transition council," he said. The Ambassador also questioned how the proposed CNT would work with the CNDD, and that if both organs were going to be in place, that the responsibilities of each should be carefully delineated. Jean-Marie Dore responded that these are details that Les Forces Vives will work out once the CNDD accepts the proposal.

¶16. (SBU) There were a number of questions about the constitutional revision process. Les Forces Vives had initially planned to hold a constitutional referendum, but then decided that it would be more efficient for the new constitution to be adopted through a presidential decree, a development that much of the assembled diplomatic community seemed to welcome. However, Charge Raspolic was concerned that the entire timeline hinges on the CNDD's acceptance of the proposed constitution, especially since the CNT would not finalize the constitution until September while the first elections would take place a few weeks later. Members of the diplomatic corps advised Les Forces Vives to consider completing the constitutional revisions as early as possible so as to allow plenty of time for any back and forth with the CNDD.

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¶17. (SBU) At one point, the French Ambassador said "if I have any advice for you, it would be that you need to be pragmatic." He agreed with the Malian Ambassador in principle that the CNDD should logically disappear, but that the CNDD is unlikely to accept its own dissolution before elections are held. "They are going to be there so you need to figure out how to work with them," he said.

¶18. (SBU) The Nigerian Ambassador, who is rather soft-spoken, diplomatically complimented the group on its efforts and unity, but then guilelessly admonished Les Forces Vives for their accommodating attitude towards the CNDD. "I am afraid that you are underestimating the situation...you are dealing with people who have seized power...if you want it back, you have to take it...with all due respect, I have now seen you address the CNDD on two separate occasions...you need to be more forceful," she said.

COMMENT

¶19. (C) Les Forces Vives are clearly making progress towards a specific proposal although there are still some details to be worked out. However, while there are now concrete dates to propose, the timeline may be unrealistic. Technically speaking, it is probably doable, but there are a number of inherent opportunities for delay. Les Forces Vives seems to be somewhat naive when it comes to dealing with the CNDD. When one Ambassador commented that the CNDD president might not immediately accept a new constitution, Jean-Marie Dore said "I don't see why he would not." Similarly, Les Forces Vives seems to be accommodating of and deferential to the CNDD when assertiveness may be what is ultimately needed to effectively pressure the CNDD to move in the right direction.

¶10. (C) There was also evidence of discord and disagreement among the assembled members of Les Forces Vives. The two civil society representatives sat at the back of the room, and when they began talking about the need for donor support for a "national concertation," political party

representatives began mumbling amongst themselves, ultimately making hand signals to tell the others to stop speaking. Alpha Conde was generally disruptive and at one point, rudely reprimanded Jean Marie Dore for whispering to the German Ambassador when he should have been listening to a question. Mamadou Syllah, always an imposing figure, made himself comfortable at the table, but did not sit next to any of the other political party leaders. His presence could not be missed since he frequently got up from the table or intermittently interjected comments and jokes in his booming voice. Given that there are now 62 official political parties, it is interesting to note that Mamadou Syllah, head of what seems to be a minor political party, has found himself a place at the negotiating table with the five major political parties. END COMMENT.
RASPOLIC